

An Abutter's Guide to the Development Review Process



This guide has been prepared in an effort to provide you, as an abutter to a proposed development project, an explanation of the public hearing and public participation process. It should be noted that this guide is not intended to be a legal guide, but to assist you with understanding how to participate in the development review process and how to best communicate any comments, questions or concerns you may have.

Why have I received a Legal Notice?

You have received this Legal Notice because you are an abutter, as defined by State Law, to a proposed development that will be reviewed by the Planning Board. This notice is required to inform an abutter that a public hearing will be held on a project.

How can I find out more about the proposed project?

Interested parties can obtain additional information about a proposed project in the following manners:

- Contact the Planning Board staff planner at 978-777-0001
- Review the application, plans and supporting materials.
- Attend the public hearing.

The Department of Planning and Human Services is located in Town Hall. Office hours are Monday – Wednesday, 8 am to 5 pm, Thursday, 8 am to 7:30 pm and Friday 8 am to 1:30 pm.

What is the purpose of the public hearing?

Public hearings serve as a forum for the Planning Board and public to review and comment on the proposed project. The scope of the Planning Board's review is restricted to the applicable sections of the zoning bylaw or subdivision regulations as referenced in the legal notice.

What is the procedure of the public Hearing?

- a. The Chair will read the public notice and open the hearing and
- b. The Chair will request a presentation of the proposed project from the applicant.
- c. Members of the Planning Board will ask questions of the applicant.
- d. The Chair will solicit public comments.
- e. At the Chair's discretion, the applicant will be requested to answer public comments.
- f. Members of the Planning Board will ask final questions.
- g. The Chair will solicit final comments from the public.
- h. Members of the Planning Board will comment on the proposed project.
- i. The Chair will close the public hearing.
- j. The Planning Board will issue a decision.

How long is the public hearing?

The complexity and size of the proposed project determines how long the public hearing will be, typically ranging from one night to several nights. When a proposed project requires more than one night, the public hearing will be continued to a specified date. However, as an abutter, it is important to note that you will NOT be notified by mail of a continued hearing. Interested parties may either contact the Planning Office or view upcoming Planning Board agenda's on the Town's website.

How do I voice my comments, questions or concerns?

During the public hearing, the Chair will ask if anyone from the public wishes to speak on the proposed project. Prior to speaking, you are requested to stand and state your name and address for the record. The following suggestions are provided to assist you in presenting testimony at a public hearing:

- Confine testimony to applicable sections within the Board's review
- Be clear and concise
- Facts are much stronger than opinion
- All questions should be directed to the Chair, not the applicant
- It is appropriate to state that you are in agreement with previous testimony.